DELCOURT

1

soleil

THE CENTRON FILES

ANDREVON /// KHALED

THE CENTRON FILES
Weasel in the Henhouse

Script
Jean-Pierre ANDREVON
Art and Colors
Afif KHALED

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THIS IS WHERE I LIVE.

ON THIS PITIFUL LITTLE MUDBALL
CIRCLING A PITIFUL LITTLE SUN.

IT MIGHT LOOK NICE FROM
WAY UP THERE. I WOULDN'T KNOW.
I'VE NEVER BEEN.

I LIVE DOWN BELOW, SOMEWHERE
AMONG THE TEEMING LIGHTS THAT MARK
OUT THE CONTINENT OF EUROPA...

SOMEWHERE IN THE MEGALOPOLIS
(POP. 1 BILLION) KNOWN AS CENTRON. EVEN
THOUGH IT AIN'T THE CENTER OF ANYTHING.

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR ME,
CHANCES ARE YOU'LL FIND ME...

IN THE NECROZONE.

WHAT'S THE NECROZONE, YOU SAY? WELL, IT'S WHAT SPRAWLS AROUND THE GATED COMMUNITIES, THE LUXURY RESIDENCES, THE HIGH-SECURITY AREAS. PEOPLE HAVE ANOTHER NAME FOR THE NECROZONE. THE SHIT. A FEW STEPS IN, AND YOU'LL FIGURE OUT WHY.

THE NECROZONE COVERS ALMOST 90% OF CENTRON. AND CONTAINS 98% OF ITS POPULATION.

IT RAINS ALL THE TIME. THEY CALL IT CLIMATE CHANGE. THAT'S WHY I'M IN THESE DUDS FROM LAST CENTURY. OR WAS IT THE ONE BEFORE? A BOGEY-STYLE TRENCHCOAT AND A SNAP-BRIM FEDORA. THIS WAY ONLY HALF OF WHAT GOD PISSES DOWN IN HIS INFINITE BOUNTY GOES TRICKLING DOWN MY COLLAR.

CENTRON

THE NECRO. IT'S WHERE I LIVE. AND WORK. OH, SO YOU WANNA KNOW WHAT I DO FOR A LIVING? REALLY?

WELL, IT'S PRETTY SIMPLE. JUST WATCH.

PARTIE
ME? OH, NOTHING. JUST PASSING BY.
ZEBBI! THAT YOU? WHATCHA WANT? WHADDAYA THINK YOU'RE DOING?

YOU SEE THAT? PUT A HOLE RIGHT THROUGH HIM! RIGHT BETWEEN THE EYES!

YA THINK HE'S ONE OF THEM?

RIGHT ON THE MONEY, FELLAS. I'M ONE OF THEM.

AND THAT'S HOW I EARN MY KEEP. RUBBING OUT WHOMEVER THEY POINT ME AT. WHOMEVER I POINT MY 2024 CUSTOM .44 MAGNUM AT. THE EXACT PLACEMENT OF THE ENTRY WOUND DOESN'T MATTER SO MUCH. THE EXIT WOUND EITHER.

OH, DON'T GO JUDGING ME NOW. IT'S A JOB LIKE ANY OTHER. YOU GET USED TO IT. ASK NOT FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS.

SPEAKING OF WHICH, I THINK SOMEONE'S CALLING ME.

GOT A JOB FOR ME?

QUITE, AUGUSTUS. I'VE JUST LOCATED YOUR NEXT TARGET. GO DOWN KYLIE MINOGUE AVENUE, STRAIGHT AHEAD.

I'LL POINT OUT YOUR TARGET WHEN WE'RE IN RANGE.

THAT'S JULES. MY PERSONAL ASSISTANT.

SOMETIMES I WONDER...

HOW I'D EVER GET ALONG WITHOUT HIM.

THERE'S YOUR TARGET: FESHID MULATERO. THE ONE WITH THE UGLY MUG.

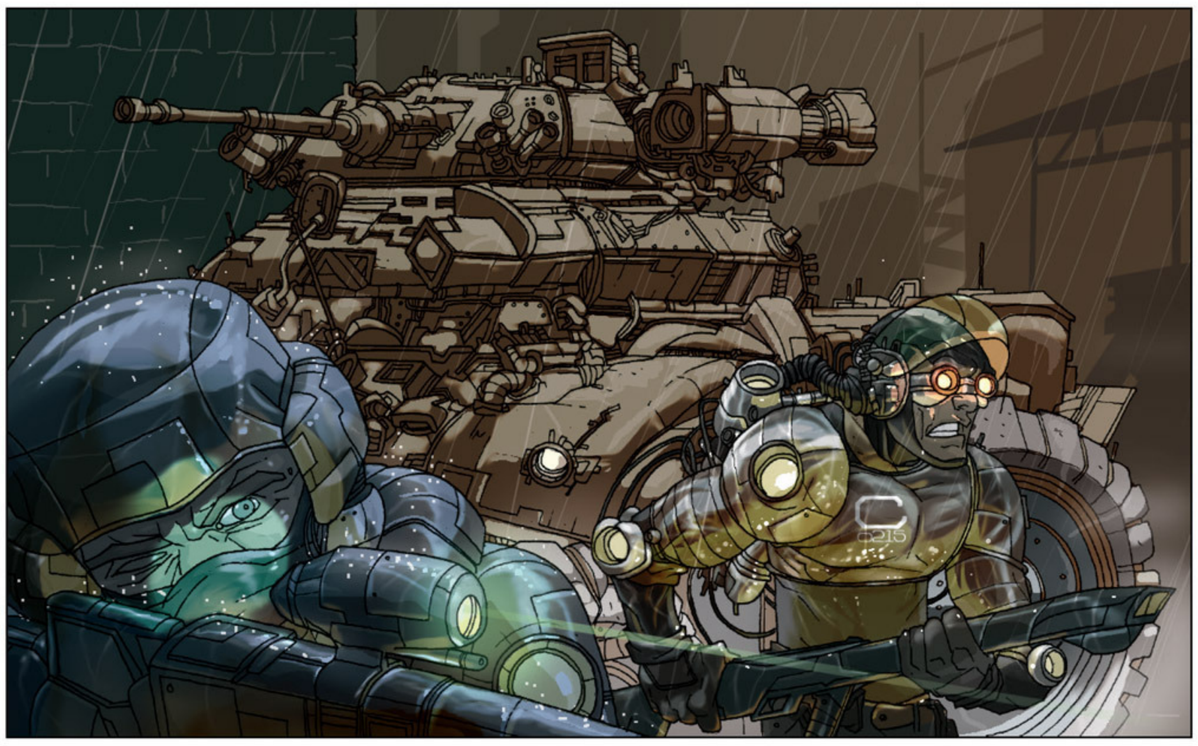
YOU GOT THAT RIGHT, JULES.

WELL...

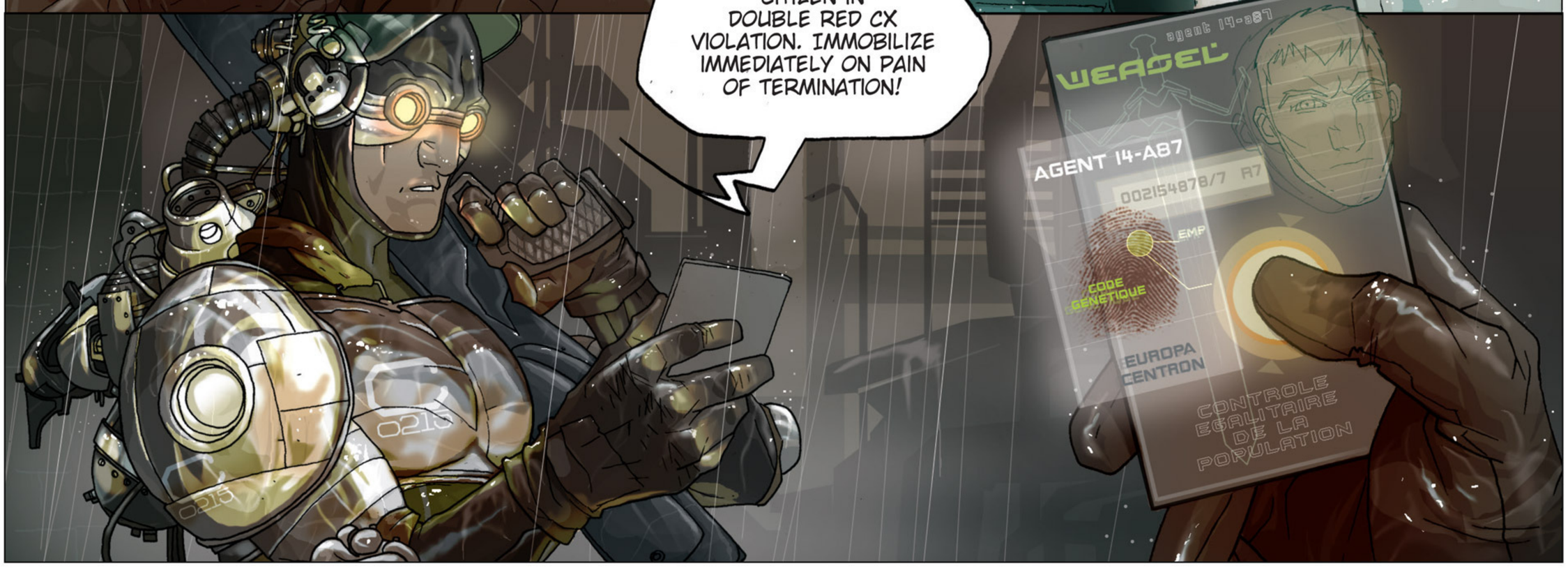
YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY. NO SOONER SAID...

THAN DONE.

STOP



NO POINT BUSTING A MICROCHIP, FELLAS. HERE, TAKE A GANDER.


CITIZEN IN DOUBLE RED CX VIOLATION. IMMOBILIZE IMMEDIATELY ON PAIN OF TERMINATION!
agent 14-a87
WEASEL
AGENT 14-A87
002154878/7 A7
EMP
CODE GÉNÉTIQUE
EUROPA CENTRON
CONTROLE EGALITAIRE DE LA POPULATION
0215
0215

THIS IS MY GET OUT OF JAIL FREE CARD. THE UNFORGEABLE PROOF THAT I'M ALLOWED TO DO... WHAT I DO.

APOLOGIES, WEASEL. THIS IS A CLASS XXX NEIGHBORHOOD. WE HAVE TO BE ON THE LOOKOUT. YOU UNDERSTAND.

PERFECTLY. THIS AIN'T MY FIRST RODEO, LIEUTENANT.

WELL, I GUESS I BETTER CALL IN THE BIOHAZARD UNIT FOR SOME SALVAGE AND RECYCLING.

YOU DO THAT, LIEUTENANT, YOU DO THAT. NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME...

I'M OFF TO GET SOME GRUB.

MAC FOOD

COSCO

I GRAB A MEAL AT THE GIANT MAC ON ENVIRO WAY: A VENTI SEAWEED BEER AND THE MASHED SEAWEED PLATTER. I'VE HAD WORSE.

THAT'S WHEN JULES RINGS ME UP AGAIN.

NAPPING ON THE CLOCK, BOSS? YOU GOT ONE LAST JOB...

... BEFORE WE CALL IT A DAY.

YOU'RE A LUCKY MAN. HE'S RIGHT HERE, JUST ONE TABLE OVER.

WELL... BETTER GET DOWN TO IT.

THOOM

GUESS I'LL JUST BE HEADING HOME NOW.

JULES'S GREEN SCREEN WINKS OFF.

THAT MEANS MY DAY'S WORK IS DONE.

NOW ALL I HAVE TO DO IS GET BACK TO MY DIGS. MY OLD TICKER MARKS OFF EVERY LAST ONE OF THE 40 MILES AND CHANGE...

IT'S A HOP, SKIP, AND A JUMP ON THE YELLOW LINE. THE FIRST TRICK IS CATCHING A TRAIN.

THE SECOND IS HOPING IT GETS YOU THERE IN ONE PIECE.

BUT I USUALLY MAKE IT.

SO THESE ARE MY DIGS: ROSE GARDEN TOWERS. NICE NAME, RIGHT? AS IN "I NEVER PROMISED YOU ONE." I'VE NEVER SEEN A SINGLE ROSE AROUND HERE–JUST A FEW THORNS.

TO GET IN, I HAVE TO SWEET TALK THE WATCHDOG.

TENANT 78 523 CTZ. TODAY'S PASSWORD IS "OOM-PAH-PAH."

IDENTIFICATION

AND THAT ABOUT DOES IT.

JUST 97 FLOORS TO GO, AND I'M HOME.

OH, RIGHT, I FORGOT: AND ABOUT HALF A MILE OF HALLWAYS.

B3

SOMETIMES YOU PASS BY A FRIENDLY FACE.

B2

EH—DOESN'T MATTER, THOUGH.

DATA

RETINE

LOG

INSTANT ACCES .....

TA-DAA! HOME SWEET HOME. YOU'VE SEEN WORSE, RIGHT?

HEY THERE, MOBY DICK! HOW WAS YOUR DAY?

MOBY, HOW 'BOUT YOU AND ME JUST SPEND A QUIET EVENING IN?

I PROMISE YOU WON'T EVEN HAVE TO MAKE SMALL TALK.

THAT GOES BOTH WAYS. I GOT NOTHING TO SAY.

AND SO, ONCE ALL THE PLEASANTRIES ARE DONE WITH...

BZZz

LOG/ mise en attente

confirmation liste:_

THE BEST WAY TO END THE NIGHT...

cheat code

LOG/ mise en attente

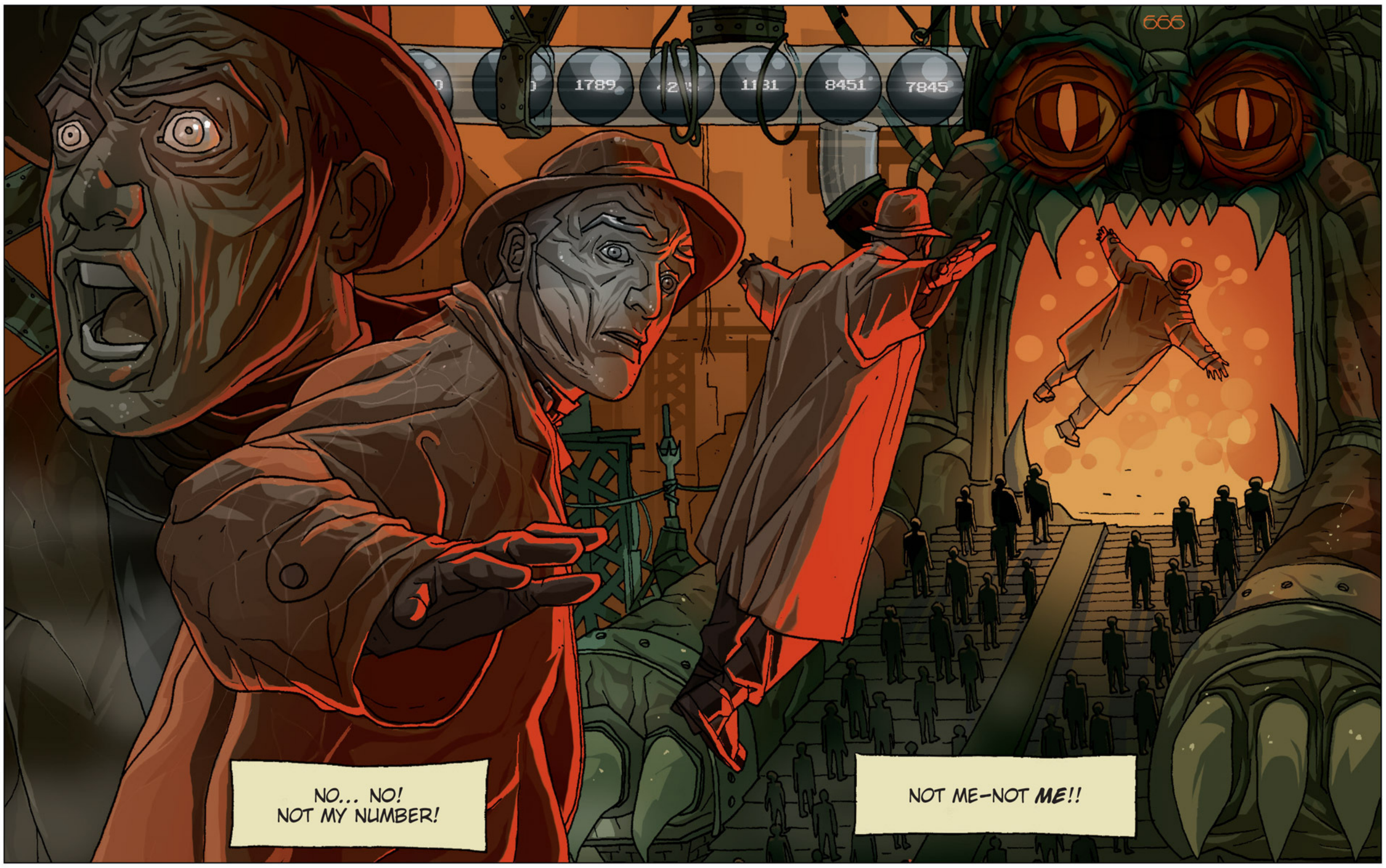
confirmation liste:_

IS JUST TO LIE DOWN...

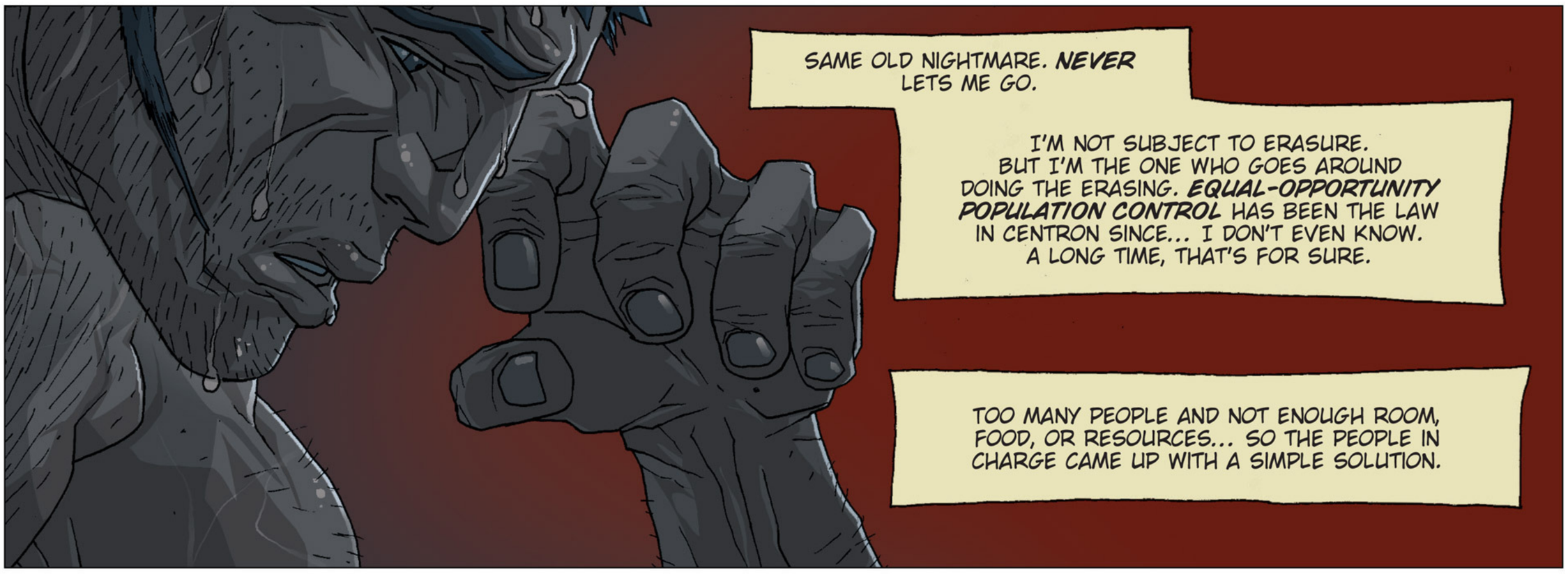
EMPTY YOUR MIND, AND DRIFT OFF.

SWEET DREAMS.

1254


666
1789
1131
8451
7845
NO... NO!
NOT MY NUMBER!
NOT ME–NOT ME!!

NO!!!
confirmation liste:_


SAME OLD NIGHTMARE. NEVER LETS ME GO.
I'M NOT SUBJECT TO ERASURE. BUT I'M THE ONE WHO GOES AROUND DOING THE ERASING. EQUAL-OPPORTUNITY POPULATION CONTROL HAS BEEN THE LAW IN CENTRON SINCE... I DON'T EVEN KNOW. A LONG TIME, THAT'S FOR SURE.
TOO MANY PEOPLE AND NOT ENOUGH ROOM, FOOD, OR RESOURCES... SO THE PEOPLE IN CHARGE CAME UP WITH A SIMPLE SOLUTION.

RUB OUT A MILLION CITIZENS A YEAR, 1% OF WHICH ARE SELECTED AT RANDOM ON A DAILY BASIS.

BY **ATROPOS**, THE DEPARTMENT OF CITIZENRY'S TAMPER-PROOF SUPERCOMPUTER.

THE SYSTEM SPARES NO ONE. THAT IS, EXCEPT COPS, SOLDIERS, AND ELECTED OFFICIALS—WHILE THEY'RE IN OFFICE.

THE DIRTY WORK OF DOING THE ERASING FALLS TO FOLKS LIKE YOURS TRULY: INCORRUPTIBLE AND OATHBOUND.

THEY CALL US **WEASELS**. YOU KNOW, THOSE CRITTERS THAT SNEAK INTO THE HENHOUSE AND LEAVE A MESS OF BLOOD AND FEATHERS.

CLANG

THE WORST PART IS, EVERYONE JUST GOES ALONG WITH IT.

FSSHHHHH

'CAUSE EVERYONE THINKS IT'LL ONLY HAPPEN TO SOMEBODY ELSE, I GUESS.

BEEP

confirmation liste:_

40 %

TRANSFERT

TIME TO CLEAN THE TOOLS OF MY TRADE. THAT'S MY MAGNUM .44 DOUBLE-BARRELED SIS SPECIAL.

ARMOR-PIERCING, EXPLOSIVE ROUNDS.

CLASSIC. EFFECTIVE.

SHLAK

BUT JUST FOR BACKUP, I ALWAYS CARRY A MODIFIED COLT .45 2027.

TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO, GENERAL CUSTER PACKED ALMOST THE SAME PIECE. EXCEPT MY CYLINDER HOLDS NINE BULLETS, NOT SIX.

MY ITASHI DART LAUNCHER. USEFUL WHEN YOU'RE CAUGHT IN A CROWD.

AND THIS IS MY BOWIE KNIFE. QUADRIFILE CARBON-STEEL BLADE. HANDLE HOLDS 24 TOOLS, FROM A BOTTLE OPENER TO A CHEESE WIRE... OR A GAROTTE.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST: MY KEFLON VEST. SIX LAYERS, TOUGHER THAN STEEL PLATE.

JULES SAVES THEM IN THE NANOCIRCUITS OF THAT NANOBRAIN OF HIS.

AIN'T THAT RIGHT, JULES?

CONFIDENTIEL

confirmation liste:_

EUROPA

auguin gerard
fayçal .....
remy cattelain
nicolas menanteau
beky
stephane zelina
amale yamine
aline biget
thomas marnié
laurent bourleaux
younes khaled

QUITE SO, AUGUSTUS.

NOW TO CHECK THE LIST ATROPOS SENT ME OF TARGETS TO BE ERASED.

MY NAME'S NOT AUGUSTUS. I HAVEN'T GOT A NAME TO BE CALLED BY. NO ONE EVER ASKS FOR A WEASEL. HE JUST SHOWS UP.

MOBY, YOU BE A GOOD BOY TILL YOUR DAD COMES BACK.

I HAVE LOCATED YOUR FIRST TARGET.

MAHFOUZ AHMRID, AKA SMALLPOX. ONE HUNDRED YARDS AHEAD, YOUR ELEVEN O'CLOCK.

Klak

NEXT TO THE HOLO-AD FOR VIRTUAL TOURS OF THE AMAZON.

THLOKK!

ONCE THE DAY'S UNDERWAY, MIGHT AS WELL GET ON WITH IT.

AAAAAAH

ka-thangg

BUT NOTHING THAT CAN'T BE HANDLED.

SURE, YOU HIT A LITTLE SNAG EVERY NOW AND THEN.

BOOOM

SO WHO'S NEXT?

OH, I THINK YOU'LL GET A KICK OUT OF THIS.

A KICK, HUH? YOU SURE GOT A WAY WITH WORDS.

ENERGY SYNDICATE

GREETINGS, CITIZENS ZDRAVSTVUYTIE. TUNGJATJETA. CZEĐĐ–

POPULATION CONTROL. LET ME THROUGH. PROSZĐ. MOLIM VAS. MERHAMET.

I'M HERE FOR AGOSTINHO, NO. 145785693215.

THANKS FOR UNDERSTANDING. SPACIBA. TEŞEKKÜR EDERIM. SUKRAN. AND HAVE A NICE DAY.

WHAT THOSE TWO WOULDN'T GIVE TO STICK A VIRUS IN YOUR DRIVE, JULES.

ROS? YOU READ ME? MOVE YOUR ASS, YOU GOT A WEASEL AFTER IT! JUST WALKED IN.

SO TELL ME, JULES, OL' PAL—WHERE'S THAT WASCALLY WABBIT?

YOUR RABBIT IS OVER THERE.

AND I DO HOPE YOU AREN'T QUESTIONING THE EFFICACY OF THE GLOBAL LOCATION SATELLITE NETWORK?

UE 2031 GO

YOU'RE ALMOST THERE. BEHIND THE FURNACE ACROSS FROM YOU.

AND MIGHT I SAY HE DOESN'T LOOK FRIENDLY.

THONK

POPULATION CONTROL! DON'T BE AN ASSHOLE!

HAH! ME, THE ASSHOLE?

UNBELIEVABLE! AND YOU CALL YOURSELF A PROFESSIONAL.

YOU WOULDN'T BE LOSING YOUR TOUCH, WOULD YOU?

SHUT YOUR FACE!

AW, NO WAY!

WAY INDEED. ANY SLOWER AND I'D HAVE BEEN SLAG.

WHONK

CAGALHAO!

ADEUS, TURD!

YOU SAID IT, BUDDY.
ADEUS!

FUNNY... THERE'S ALWAYS GOTTA BE SOMEONE WHO THINKS THEY'RE SMART. WHO THINKS THEY CAN BEAT ERASURE.

BUT NO ONE EVER DOES. ***EVER***.

STABB

ALL RIGHT, RUBBERNECKERS, SHOW'S OVER. BACK TO WORK! MOVE ALONG!

THAT ABOUT DO IT FOR TODAY? HAVEN'T EVEN TAKEN LUNCH YET.

SORRY, THERE'S JUST ONE MORE TO GO. BUT I BELIEVE YOU WOULD CALL IT A PIECE OF CAKE. CONSIDER IT DESSERT.

HAVE A NICE NIGHT, FELLAS. AND THANKS FOR THE TIP-OFF.

THE LAST JOB OF THE DAY WAS AN HOUR AWAY ON THE YELLOW LINE. FOR ONCE, IT'D STOPPED RAINING, AND THROUGH A JAGGED HOLE IN THE CLOUDS LIKE AN INTESTINAL TEAR, WATERY SUNLIGHT WAS HEMORRHAGING FREELY AND SERENELY ONTO THE TOWERS OF CENTRON.

THE LAST JOB'S NAME WAS ***ASORA NAOMI CAMPBELL.***

SHE WAS IN A SHOW.

SHE **WAS** THE SHOW. BUT EH, SHOWS–NOT REALLY MY THING.

THERE SHE IS: YOUR WABBIT. MARCELLA MURACCIOLI. 7996—

HELLO? CAN YOU HEAR ME? IS THERE A PROBLEM?

A PROBLEM?

NOW WHAT KIND OF QUESTION IS THAT, JULES? PROBLEMS.

DUF

WHO, ME? NEVER.

NOOO

SEE, JULES?

NO NEED TO WORRY.

DARTS ARE BETTER WHEN THERE'S A CROWD. I HEAR ALL YOU FEEL IS A LITTLE STING, LIKE A BEE'S.

NOT LIKE I'VE EVER TRIED IT ON MYSELF.

We at Dynatonik Aerocabs thank you for choosing our company, the best in Centron for speed and safety—

LOOK, I'M BEAT. LEAVE ME ALONE, WILL YA?

I myself, Aero AK 7227 CXZ, feel incredibly honored to transport a customer that my olfactor has identified as a Class-A citizen—

WILL YA SHUT UP ALREADY?

We have just reached a cruising altitude of 7000 feet over the Parisian basin. Current temperature on the ground is—

SHUT UP!!

CENTRON

We will reach our destination in exactly 7 minutes and 48 seconds, barring unforeseen delays.

KEEP THIS UP, AND I'LL GIVE YOU AN UNFORESEEN DELAY!

I SHOULD KNOW BETTER BY NOW THAN TO OPEN MY BIG MOUTH.

AN UNFORESEEN DELAY WAS JUST WAITING TO BE MINE FOR THE ASKING.

DIX MILLE ROSES

Here we are! Exactly as estimated. Your account has just been debited.

On behalf of Dynatoniks Aerocabs and myself, we hope to see you again soon.

TAXI

LET GO OF ME, FUCKERS! SVOLOTCHI!

It's such a pleasure to see you again so soon, customer! What is our destination this time?

THAT HELIJET, STRAIGHT AHEAD! STEP ON IT! STOP THEM!

I'm afraid that won't be possible. I am not authorized to do so.

SHUT YOUR FACE! DEPARTMENT OF CITIZENRY, OVERRIDE CODE MPAAA 01!

In that case, no problem!

NO PROBLEM, MY ASS.

Who—whose account shall I... DZZT!

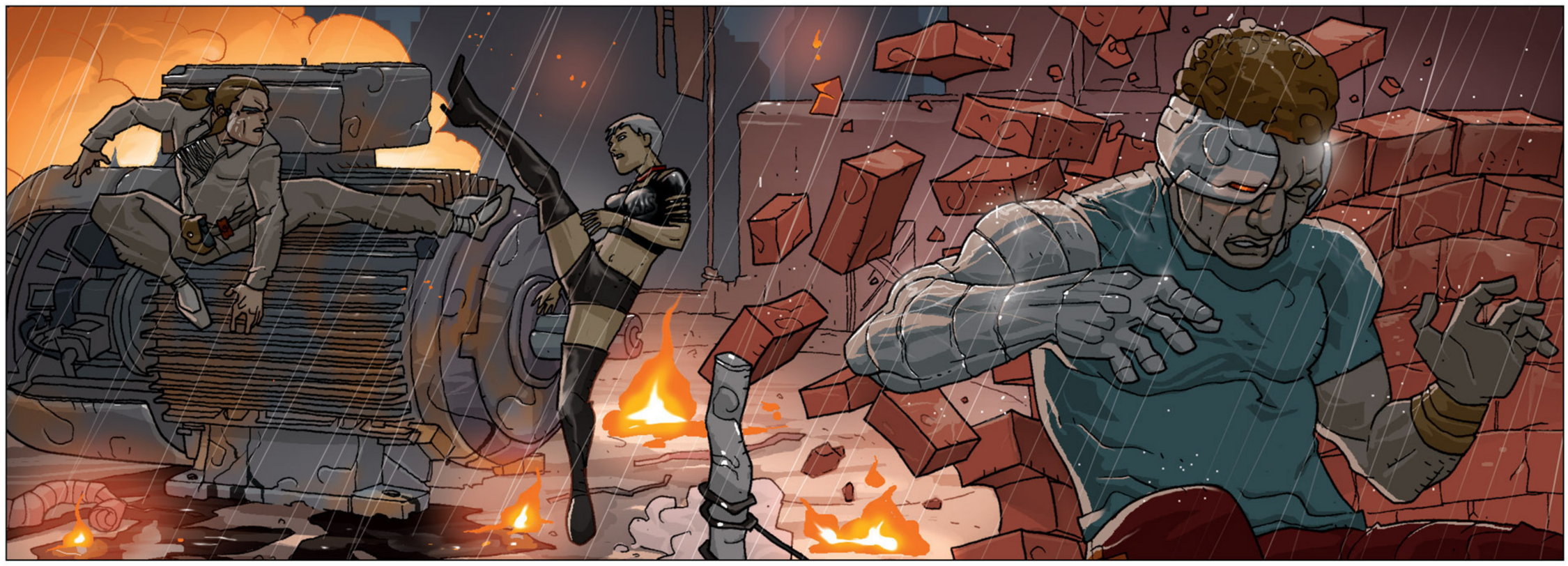
SORRY. A BIT DRASTIC, BUT I DIDN'T HAVE A CHOICE.

NEITHER DID I. WATCH OUT!

BEHIND YOU!

OOOF

WHOMP



SHRAKK

Now that's quite enough! Who's paying for all this?

THWOKK

GAGIMARDJOTH, DZAGLI!

VIN...? ARA! ARRRGH!

SLORCH

OH, IT'S YOU.

DON'T TAKE THIS THE WRONG WAY, BUT YOU STICK YOUR NOSE IN MY BUSINESS, I STICK MY NOSE IN YOURS.

HANG ON. YOU SURE YOU'RE GOING TO BE OK?

YEAH... NO... DUNNO... I THINK I-I LOST MY HAT AGAIN.

TWO LAKES OF BLUE HOVERED BRIEFLY ABOVE ME, AND THEN NEXT THING I KNEW, EVERYTHING WENT COMPLETELY BLACK. OUT LIKE A LIGHT. TALK ABOUT NAPPING ON THE JOB...

WHEN I CAME TO AGAIN, I WASN'T AT HOME.

I DIDN'T RECOGNIZE THE ROOM. IT WAS PROBABLY MY NEIGHBOR'S.

HURRGHH

THE FIRST THOUGHT TO CROSS MY MIND WAS HOW SHE MANAGED TO DRAG ALL 225 LBS. OF ME BACK HERE.

23:15

BUT I DIDN'T ASK.

DON'T TALK. DON'T MOVE. YOU ALMOST GOT SKINNED ALIVE OUT THERE, LIKE A RAT BEING READIED FOR THE DEEP FRYER. JUST LET ME DO MY JOB AND DON'T WORRY: I'VE GOT FIRST AID TRAINING.

NNGH

23:16

I DID AS SHE SAID. I DIDN'T MOVE. I DIDN'T TALK.

amylase

FOR A LONG MOMENT, I JUST SAT THERE LISTENING TO THE GENTLE PITPAT OF HER FINGERS ON MY SKIN.

IT WASN'T TILL SHE'D WRAPPED ME UP LIKE A MUMMY THAT IT SANK IN HOW NAKED I WAS.

I WAS THINKING ABOUT MY EQUIPMENT, OF COURSE. SO I WHISPERED:

SORRY, BUT WHAT DID YOU DO WITH–

THE TWENTY POUNDS OF PIG IRON YOU HAUL AROUND?

DON'T WORRY, IT'S ALL HERE.

I HAD A LITTLE TROUBLE WORKING YOU OUT OF YOUR SHELL. IT'S EASIER PEELING A LOBSTER. BUT IT HAD TO BE DONE. YOU HAD TWO BROKEN RIBS.

THANKS. MAYBE THAT SHOULD'VE BEEN THE FIRST THING I SAID. THE SECOND: WHAT DID THOSE GUYS WANT WITH YOU?

YOU THINK THEY GAVE ME A CHANCE TO ASK? THEY JUST WANTED ME, IS ALL.

WHETHER THEY WERE LOOKING TO CHOW DOWN ON SOME FRESH MEAT OR FOR SOME GIRL NO ONE WOULD MISS–

FOR THEIR VERY OWN CHAINSAW SNUFF FILM, I DON'T KNOW AND I DON'T CARE. OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS.

CAN I ASK YOU SOMETHING?

SURE.

WHY DIDN'T YOU USE YOUR ARSENAL? YOU COULD'VE TAKEN CARE OF THOSE **Сволочи** IN UNDER FIVE SECONDS.

PROBABLY THREE, IN FACT. BUT SEE, OUTSIDE OF MY JOB, I'M JUST A REGULAR CITIZEN. I CAN'T GO AROUND USING MY GUNS.

I DON'T GET IT. ARE YOU SOME KIND OF COP?

SHLAK

IT TOOK A MINUTE BEFORE I COULD ANSWER HER, BUT IT SHOULDN'T HAVE.

A COP? NOT EXACTLY, NO. I'M A CIVIL SERVANT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF CITIZENRY. ***A WEASEL.***

I WAITED FOR HER TO REACT, BUT ALL SHE DID WAS LIGHT A EUPHORETTE.

A LIGHT SMOKE–A SLIMM. SHE OFFERED ME ONE, BUT I WAVED IT AWAY. HER LIGHTER WAS SHAPED LIKE AN ELEPHANT.

clic

I JUST STOOD THERE AND WATCHED HER THROUGH LOWERED EYELIDS.

TRYING TO READ HER THOUGHTS.

SCAN THE BRAINWAVES SHE WAS SILENTLY BOMBARDING ME WITH.

DIX MILLE ROSES

SOMETHING ALONG THE LINES OF: IT'S A DIRTY JOB...

... JUST LIKE MINE. BUT SOMEONE'S GOTTA DO IT.

AFTER A COUPLE CENTURIES...

SHE GAVE ME A SMILE...

FROM BEHIND HER WALL OF SMOKE.

I NEVER INTRODUCED MYSELF. MY NAME'S JOSERINE PRAAKISLAVA, BUT YOU CAN CALL ME ***JOS***.

I GOT NOTHING FOR YOU TO CALL ME, JOS. WHEN YOU'RE OATHBOUND, YOU'RE NOBODY ANYMORE.

DOESN'T MATTER. I'LL JUST WHISTLE. YOU HUNGRY? I CAN ORDER US UP SOMETHING.

THANKS, BUT NO THANKS. MY OLD TICKER'S TELLING ME IT'S LATE, AND TOMORROW– WELL, IT'S BACK TO WORK.

I KNOW HOW IT IS. I'VE GOT A JOB TOO. JUST TRYING TO BE NEIGHBORLY. ANOTHER TIME, MAYBE.

BIP BIP

I GAVE HER A SMILE, AND WE EXCHANGED DIGICODES.

THEN I LEFT. I'D ALREADY STAYED TOO LONG.

OH, RIGHT–SORRY ABOUT YOUR HAT.

NO WORRIES. I'VE GOT TONS.

WHAT A DELIGHTFUL YOUNG WOMAN, DON'T YOU THINK?

HOW WOULD YOU KNOW?

I SCANNED HER EXTERNAL GENOTYPE. SHE'S A PERFECT MATCH WITH YOUR—

OK, ENOUGH. SHUT IT! THAT'S NONE OF YOUR–

I'M JUST SAYING IT FOR YOUR OWN GOOD, BOSS.

STAND DOWN, YOU HEAR ME? OR I'LL UNPLUG YOU.

B21

YOU'D HAVE TO CUT OFF YOUR OWN HAND FOR THAT.

FSSHHH

BY REVEILLE THE NEXT DAY, MY K-BED'S MED MODULES HAVE DISSOLVED MY BANDAGES.

AND THE NANORECONSTRUCTORS MY NURSE SHOT ME UP WITH HAD DONE THEIR JOB. WE ALL JUST GO AROUND DOING OUR JOBS.

I HADN'T EXACTLY TOLD JOS THE TRUTH LAST NIGHT. TODAY'S MY DAY OFF. I WASN'T WORKING.

SO I JUST WHILED AWAY THE HOURS WATCHING THE MUTABLE SPECTACLE OF THE WORLD.

SOMETIMES, NOTHING BEATS A LITTLE WELL-EARNED DAYDREAMING.

NOT THAT THERE ISN'T HIGH-STAKES DRAMA TOO.

IT'S THE SAME OLD THREEPENNY OPERA.

BUT MOST OF THE TIME...

LATER, THE DAY WAS DRAGGING ON, SO I ORDERED UP A MOVIE FOR MYSELF.

BEEP

THEY JUST DON'T MAKE'EM LIKE THEY USED TO: BLACK AND WHITE, 2D, WITH REAL ACTORS. THEY COST A FORTUNE, BUT I LIKE'EM.

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF ONE OF MY FAVES–*THE MALTESE FALCON*–I GOT A CALL.

CODEC 1024

DECODING...

THE CALLER WAS BLOCKING HIS ID. I PROBABLY COULD'VE HACKED THROUGH, BUT WHAT WAS THE POINT? HIS MESSAGE WAS SHORT AND TO THE POINT.

IT'S STEY. JUST WANTED TO MAKE SURE YOU HADN'T MOVED. WE NEED TO TALK. IT'S URGENT. I'LL CALL YOU BACK.

VOCAL

KLIK

THAT WAS WHEN THE CALL GOT CUT OFF. STEY IS OLEG STERANKO–OR USED TO BE, IN ANOTHER LIFE. WE'D BOTH DONE TOURS OF DUTY IN PLACES WE SHOULDN'T HAVE.

NEXT THING I KNEW, ME AND STEY BOTH GOT SHUNTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF CITIZENRY. THEN I LOST SIGHT OF HIM. I DIDN'T BOTHER WONDERING WHAT HE MIGHT WANT FROM ME NOW. I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR QUESTIONS WITHOUT ANSWERS.

A BIT LATER I WENT OUT, NO PLACE PARTICULAR IN MIND. MY NURSE WASN'T WHERE SHE USUALLY WAS. INSTEAD, THERE WAS THIS WOMAN IN A LOUD GETUP THAT STUCK OUT LIKE A LIGHTHOUSE IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC.

EVENING, SAILOR! HOW 'BOUT BOARDING MY SHIP? IT'S 200 CREDITS TO PULL UP AND DOCK.

300 FOR A CRUISE, AND 500 TO GO TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER.

B12

I POLITELY DECLINED. DIDN'T WANT TO GET SEASICK, YOU MIGHT SAY.

IT WAS TOMORROW BEFORE I KNEW IT. AND THEN I WAS BACK ON THE JOB.

READING OVER MY LIST OF THE DAY'S TARGETS, ONE NAME MADE ME BAT AN EYELASH. BUT ONLY ONCE. TO A WEASEL, THEY'RE ALL JUST HENS IN THE HENHOUSE.

telechargement liste

list

gerome l'hottelier
Fayçal amale
aziz yamine
moniri nbae
stephane zelina
remy cattelain
tarrec flab
tristan lagrange
pat cab
choco creed
karine auguin
laurent bourlot
bratt simon
supplice marie noel
coconino
nicolas menanto
sebastien r
tib gordon
julie maubras

REC

9:16 AM

YEP, THE OL' DAILY GRIND...

KRASH

THOOF

10:53 AM

SOMETIMES IT GETS A TAD MORE COMPLICATED.

WHAT A CUTE LITTLE FELLA!

CAN I HOLD HIM FOR A SEC, CITIZEN?

HEY, HOW ABOUT A NEW A TOY? HERE, TAKE THIS.

AIN'T IT PRETTY?

IT EVEN GOES BOOM!

THOOF

OK, ENOUGH, YOU'VE HAD YOUR FUN. GIMME BACK THE PHOSPHORUS GRENADE.

C'MON, SETTLE DOWN, YOU LITTLE SHIT.

THOSE BABYSITTERS HERE YET, JULES?

VROOOOM

YOU TOOK YOUR SWEET TIME. HE PEED ON ME. TAKE CARE OF HIM. HIS MOM HAD A LITTLE ACCIDENT.

NO PROBLEM, WEASEL.

WHERE WE'RE TAKING HIM, HE'LL BE SPOILED ROTTEN.

I DIDN'T BOTHER WISHING THE KID LUCK. I'M NEVER SURE WITH SECTION R. SPOILED ROTTEN, EH? MORE LIKE FRESH MEAT.

NOOO

SOMETIMES MY JOB IS DOWNRIGHT SATISFYING.

HEY, ASSCLOWN! GOT A LITTLE PRESENT FOR YA...

???

BLAMM

WHOA! YOU REALLY FUCKED HIS FACE UP GOOD! JUST ONE SHOT, TOO!

WHAT KINDA GUN IS THAT? CAN I SEE IT? CAN I HOLD IT?

YOU SEEM LIKE A NICE GUY. I'LL GIVE YOU A GOOD PRICE. 50 NICKELS–NO, 30!

OR FREE, IF YOU GIMME YOUR TRENCH-COAT. THAT'S A SWEET TRENCHCOAT.

OR HOW 'BOUT THIS: YOU GIMME YOUR CARD, I GRAB SOME SMOKES N'DRINKS, AND WE HANG OUT AS LONG AS YOU WANT. ALL NIGHT, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE INTO.

YOU WON'T BE SORRY. I'M TALENTED. I CAN TAKE REAL GOOD CARE OF YOUR–

DON'T BOTHER. I LOST'EM IN THE WAR.

HERE'S YOUR 30 NICKELS.

NOW SCRAM!

5:13 PM

SOMETIMES I GET THERE AND THE JOB'S ALREADY DONE FOR ME.

IT HAPPENS. I'M NOT TOO BROKEN UP ABOUT IT. WHILE JULES LOOKED UP MY NEXT TARGET, I TOOK SOME TIME OUT TO EAT... SPRING ROLLS. DON'T ASK ME WHAT WAS IN'EM.

SNIF

SNIF

8:09 PM

STILL... SOMEWHERE, SOMEHOW, THIS DAY WAS FATED TO BE SPECIAL.

WELL, JULES? YOU LOCATE THAT LAST JOB YET?

SORRY, BOSS. I CAN'T SEEM TO FIND TARGET NO. 9.

YOUNES

04

04

jules m
3-2-04

IT DOESN'T HAPPEN OFTEN, BUT WHEN IT DOES, I JUST HEAD ON HOME.

THWACK

DON'T MOVE!

FUCK! IT'S ME! STERANKO!

SORRY. KINDA TWITCHY RIGHT NOW. DAY BEFORE YESTERDAY, I GOT INTO A LITTLE DUST-UP RIGHT AROUND HERE.

LIKE I SAID, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. BUT WE HAVE TO TALK.

YOU GONNA ASK ME UP FOR A DRINK?

SO IS IT JUST ME, OR YOU GOT PROBLEMS?

NEED I REMIND YOU THAT YOU'RE ON VIDEO JUST WALKING INTO THIS BUILDING?

DON'T WORRY.

IS YOUR PLACE CLEAN? YOU SURE NO ONE PLANTED EYES OR EARS ON YOU?

WHERE'D THEY PLANT THEM IF THEY HAD? UNDER MY PINKY NAIL? I'M 100% CLEAN; IT'S PART OF THE JOB. RIGHT, JULES?

AFFIRMATIVE, BOSS!

HEAR THAT? SO SPILL. I'VE HAD A LONG DAY, AND IF YOU'RE HERE, IT AIN'T OVER YET.

THIS MIGHT BE KIND OF LONG TOO. HOW ABOUT THAT DRINK?

I DON'T GOT A HOME ANYMORE. I DON'T EVEN EXIST. I'M ON THE LAM. YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE I CAN TALK TO ABOUT THIS. SOMETHING SHADY'S HAPPENING IN THE DEPARTMENT.

MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME.

SOME GUY HIGH UP IN THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ASKED TO MEET WITH ME. A SECTION HEAD FROM THE SCREENING SERVICE, GOES BY MIROSLIV ERWAN. REMEMBER THAT NAME. CLAIMED THERE WAS SOME OFFICIAL CONNECTION BETWEEN THE POLYMICIN BOOTHS AND THE DEPARTMENT OF CITIZENRY.

YOU CATCHING MY DRIFT?

NOT REALLY. WHY DON'T YOU LAY IT OUT FOR ME?

WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO, DRAW A PICTURE? ATROPOS'S LOTTERY IS BULLSHIT!

THE DEPARTMENT ACTUALLY PICKS OUT OUR TARGETS, AND IT'S TIED TO SCREENING.

I TOOK SOME TIME TO THINK IT OVER. POLYMICIN BOOTHS ARE BRANCHES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH. EVERY CITIZEN IN CENTRON GOES THERE ONCE A SEASON FOR A COMPLETE EXAM. IT'S FREE, AUTOMATIC, MANDATORY—"TO ENSURE A BETTER, LONGER LIFESPAN," AS THE SLOGAN GOES.

EVEN I HAVE TO GO TO SCREENING. MY LAST TIME WAS A FEW WEEKS BACK.

CONFIG

STAT

THIS STORY ABOUT THE BOOTHS BEING RIGGED JUST DOESN'T HOLD UP. NEW RUMORS ABOUT ATROPOS POP UP EVERY DAY, BUT NO ONE'S EVER BEEN ABLE TO PROVE ANYTHING.

THAT DOESN'T MEAN THEY WON'T THIS TIME. MIROSLIV SAYS HE KNOWS WHAT HE'S TALKING ABOUT.

STUBB

STUBB

YEAH, SURE. BUT TELL ME, STERANKO, JUST OUT OF CURIOSITY: WHY'D YOU SKIP OUT ON THE SERVICE? DID YOU GET TRANSFERRED?

ARE YOU KIDDING? I WENT ON THE RUN. NO ONE LIKED WHAT I HAD TO TELL THEM. I MEAN, DO YOU?

THAT'S NOT THE POINT. GUYS LIKE US, WE CAN'T JUST QUIT; YOU KNOW THAT. EVEN IF YOU'RE HOLED UP AT THE EARTH'S CORE, THEY CAN LOCATE YOU IN A JIFFY.

'CAUSE OF THESE, YOU MEAN?

STERANKO SLAPPED THE BACK OF HIS NECK, RIGHT WHERE THE CHIP WAS ENCYSTED: A UNIVERSAL ORGANIC POLYMODULE INSERTED INTO EVERY CITIZEN IN CENTRUM THE DAY THEY'RE BORN.

B204

IT'S OUR INDELIBLE AND INCORPORATED ID, WITH US TILL THE DAY WE DIE.

IT'S HOW THE DEPARTMENT OF CITIZENRY, OR THE CYBERPOLICE, CAN LOCATE US ANYTIME, ANYWHERE.

SYSTEME REPERAGE

laura

000457778%*

LAURA JANNETTE WALEN

QUARTIER SUD

57778%*

000458%*

IT'S ALSO HOW JULES FINDS ME MY TARGETS.

LAURE

SEE THAT? MY CHIP: DAMN THING'S BEEN EXTRACTED AND PULVERIZED. I'M A FREE MAN. GOT IT EXCISED. THE PARTY LINE'S ALL LIES: IT DOESN'T KILL YOU. I'M LIVING PROOF.

WHO DID THAT TO YOU?

I DON'T FEEL LIKE TELLING YOU JUST YET.

JUST KNOW THERE'S A SECRET ORGANIZATION CALLED THE TUNNEL RATS.

THEY LIVE IN THE DRIER SECTIONS OF THE ABANDONED METRO LINES.

THERE AREN'T LOTS OF THEM FOR NOW, BUT THEY'RE RECRUITING. AND THEY'RE WORKING TO FREE US.

A GROUP OF CYBERBIOLOGISTS WENT OVER TO THEIR SIDE. THEY'RE THE ONES WHO FIGURED OUT HOW...

... TO RID US OF THESE PIECES OF SHIT.

CAT GOT YOUR TONGUE? YOU DON'T SEEM VERY INTERESTED IN WHAT I'M SAYING.

I'M JUST TIRED, IS ALL. AND IT'S TIME.

TIME?
TIME FOR WHAT?

TIME FOR YOU TO DIE, STERANKO.

THE CONVERSATION STOPPED RIGHT THERE.

I JUST DID WHAT I HAD TO DO.

STERANKO DIDN'T TRY TO PROTEST. HE WAS MY LAST JOB OF THE DAY.

BLAMM

THE ONE JULES HADN'T BEEN ABLE TO LOCATE.

NOW I KNEW WHY.

WHAT I DIDN'T KNOW WAS WHAT TO MAKE OF HIS STORY.

NOTHING, PROBABLY. BESIDES, I WASN'T BEING PAID TO THINK.

STILL, WHAT WITH ALL HIS GRANDSTANDING, STERANKO HAD MANAGED TO SOW DOUBT IN MY MIND. I COULD FEEL THE UGLY LITTLE SEED TRYING TO PUSH OUT OF MY SKULL.

THE WHOLE TIME THE CLEANING BOTS WERE LAPPING UP THE BLOOD THAT TROUBLEMAKER HAD SPILLED ALL OVER MY CARPET, ALL THE WAY TILL RECYCLING CAME AND GOT RID OF THE BODY, MY BRAIN KEPT THINKING...

I COULD TELL I WAS HEADED FOR A HEAP OF TROUBLE. BIG TIME.

BUT NOT TONIGHT. TROUBLE COULD WAIT. TONIGHT WAS FOR SLEEPING. TOMORROW WAS ANOTHER DAY.

TO BE CONTINUED...